

Continuation Grant Review Score sheet

Applicant:	Montana Conservation Corps	Reviewer:	Grant Review Workgroup
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Scoring		
0	-	Lack of explanation/change inadequately justified
1	-	Explanation/change adequately described
2	-	Explanation/change adequately described with strong justification



Instructions for Scoring Applications

The Grant Review Workgroup role is critical to ensuring the selection of high-quality grant proposals. As a Grant Reviewer your primary responsibility is to read grant applications, review them for quality, and reach consensus on proposal quality with your fellow review members. Here are some of the key elements we want you to keep in mind as you begin the review process:

Assign scores based on given criteria in the RFP and 2011 Corporation for National and Community Service

AmeriCorps Application Instructions: Your rating should reflect your opinion of the applicant's ability to meet each criterion provided on the Grant Review Score sheet. Do not make assumptions about missing background or project information, review only what is included. **The Montana Strategic Initiatives will only be used for ranking - DO NOT penalize the applicant for lack of Montana Strategic Initiatives.

Read for substance: A high-quality application is not always grammatically perfect. Being a good grant reviewer requires an ability to judge the substance of an idea, rather than the manner in which it is presented.

Comment on program quality: Take the time to make thoughtful comments to justify your score; comment on both strengths and weaknesses.

Use specific and descriptive phrases in your comments, such as "the applicant did not adequately describe....."; "it is unclear whether....."; "the applicant should be asked to clarify.....".

Avoid interjecting your own biases: For example, even if you do not think tutoring programs are effective, your opinion should not affect the objective appraisal of a proposal for support of tutoring initiatives.

Comments: both verbal and written, during this process are public documents.

1. Read the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) AmeriCorps Application Guidelines and Instructions

- Prior to reading ANY applications, this is extremely important.
- You will not be able to fairly evaluate a proposal unless you have an understanding of what has been asked by CNCS.

2. Review the Grant Review Score sheet

- The review questions were taken directly from the application guidelines and will help you read, evaluate and understand the main point.
- Each section of the scoresheet corresponds to one major section of the proposal.
- Questions at the beginning of each section will help you focus on the main points.

3. Lead Reviewer(s)

- You will be informed which application(s) you are the lead reviewer by Governor's Office of Community Service Staff.
- Each work group member will be a lead reviewer on at least 1 application.
- Lead reviewers will lead the work group discussion and interview of the applicant.
- The lead reviewer has a comprehensive understanding of the assigned application.
- Primary Responsibilities
- Open the discussion on the application by providing a very brief summary of the proposed program and comment on overall strengths and weaknesses.
- Lead section discussions. Reviewers must come to consensus on a final score to be awarded in each section before they move on to the next section.
- The lead reviewer will approve Consensus Review Score sheet created by Governor's Office of Community Service after consensus has been reached.
- This page will be sent to the applicant after the final selections are made.

4. Skim all of the applications before you begin scoring

- Understand how applications relate to one another in terms of general strengths and weaknesses.

5. You will rate the application on a numerical scale.

- Assign a score for each question on a scale of zero to two (score allocation chart included in packet).
- Provide specific comments about strengths and weaknesses on the score sheet that justify your score and identify issues that need to be clarified.

6. Do not write on the applications themselves.

- You may highlight or underline sections of the proposals, but do not write any comments.

7. Score Sheet

- Keep your grant review score sheets with you and bring them to the November 30th interview process. You will retain the score sheets after the December 1st meeting.

8. Consensus Scoring

- Consensus Scores will be determined on December 1st by the entire work group
- If the work group cannot come to a consensus then scoring will be based on averages of score totals

9. Final Ranking—to be done December 1st 2010

- Final Ranking is based on the consensus review score sheet, Montana initiatives, and the Governor's Office of Community Service staff recommendation.
- Final ranking is used to determine ranking among applications very close in consensus scores.

10. Review group will select one member to present the Grant Review Work Group recommendations to the full commission during the December 10th 2010 full commission meeting.

I. Application and Applicant Info

Are there any changes to the applicants info, or application information (unscored)?

II. Continuation Narrative

2011 AmeriCorps Application	SCORE (0-2):	Comments (Strengths and Weaknesses)
Are there any changes regarding Rational and Approach ? Are these changes justified?	n/a	
Are there any changes regarding Member Outputs and outcomes ? Are these changes justified?	n/a	
Are there any changes regarding Organizational Capacity ? Are these changes justified?	n/a	
Are there any changes regarding The Evaluation Plan ? Are these changes justified?	n/a	
Are there any changes regarding Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy ? Are these changes justified?	n/a	
Are there any changes regarding Cost Member Service Year ? Are these changes justified?	n/a	
Is any clarification information offered? Are these clarifications justified?	n/a	
Are there any further continuation changes ? Are these changes justified?	n/a	
Enrollment: If the program enrolled less than 100% of slots received during their last full year of program operation, did they provide an explanation, and describe their plan for improvement?	n/a	
Enrollment rate is calculated by dividing regular slots filled plus refill slots filled by regular slots awarded.		
Retention: If the program were not able to retain all of your members during their last full year of program operation, did they provide an explanation, and describe their plan for improvement?	2	Talked about enrollment and retention, did not discuss how they will improve in the future since they are not at the level req'd, they did a good job all considered
While we recognize retention rates may vary among equally effective programs depending on the program model, we expect grantees to pursue the highest retention rate possible. Retention rate is calculated by dividing the number of members exited with award (full or partial award) by the number of members enrolled.		
Total	2	Of Possible 2

Multi state Applicants Only

Does the Applicant?

- Describe the manner and extent to which they consulted with the State Commission in the states in which they plan to operate?	n/a	
Total	0	Of Possible 0

III. Performance Measurement

Are there any changes to the applicants methods of performance measurement?	No	If yes please answer the below questions
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Does the Applicant?

- Describe the overall change they want to see by the end of the three-year grant cycle?	n/a	
- Explain how they will measure impact?	n/a	
- Explain how they will report on this on an annual basis?	n/a	
- Explain how they determined their performance measure targets?	n/a	
Total	0	Of Possible 0

IV. Budget

2010 AmeriCorps Application	Score (0-2)	Comments(Strengths and Weaknesses)
Does the Applicant?		
-Provide adequate detail regarding all budget amendments?	2	Explained everything
-Incorporate any required corporation increases	2	
-Describe their plan for increasing their overall share of budgeted costs	2	Great job on match, good at making money
-Provide a detailed budget for the upcoming year	2	
-Describe sources of match, amount, match classification, and match source	2	Broken down by agency 2+ very well described and documented
-Meet their match requirement	2	
Total	12	Of Possible 12

2010 AmeriCorps Applicant	MT Conservation Corps	Reviewer	Grant Review Workgroup
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Overall Strengths of Proposal:

- Program is established/proven history and has done great things in the state
- Partnerships through-out the state are good
- Easy to quantify the work they do, but the program does much more
- Expansion and the veterans corps is a highlight

Overall Weaknesses of Proposal:

- Setting the bar higher than 50% when competing at the national level, without background it is hard to understand how this is actually a good measurement

Interview Questions:

- With your Veterans team proposing to work on beetle kill projects, how will you insure the program is not displacing workers?
- You mentioned creating a Spanish Recruitment poster to help in diversifying your crews, what has been the best recruitment tool for you?
- Is 50% an adequately high bar for increasing leadership skills?
- What are your 2011 plans?

Reviewer Score					
Continuation Score					
Total	14	Of Possible	14	Section Percent	100.00%
Section Percent	100.00%	X	100	=	100.00
					Final Score

Lead Reviewer	Jack Chambers	Final Score Approved	100
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Grant Review

*This score sheet does not affect the application score and is used by the Grant Review Workgroup for ranking purposes only.

Scoring

- + Met and Demonstrated experience
- ✓ Met expectation
- Did not meet requirement/expectation

Montana State Service Plan

Montana State Initiatives

- The Governor's strategic initiative for clean energy
- The Governor and First Lady's strategic initiative for math and science education
- Expand and Promote Volunteerism in Montana

Does the Participant?	Score	Comment
- Have a plan to include the Governor's Clean Energy initiative	+	Warm Hearts Warm Homes
- Have a plan to include the Governor and First Lady's Math and Science initiative?	✓	
- Explain the how they intend to expand and promote volunteerism in Montana?	+	

Montana Expectations for all Programs

- Disability inclusion in the design and delivery of the program
- A collaborative approach to program planning, design and delivery
- Demonstrated ability to successfully administer an AmeriCorps or other federal grant
- Addressing rural, underserved or areas of extreme poverty that are not currently served by AmeriCorps programs

Did the Participant?	Score	Comment
- Explain how their program will be inclusive?	+	
- Explain how their program will have a collaborative approach to program planning, design and delivery?	+	
- Demonstrate ability to successfully administer an AmeriCorps or other federal grant?	+	
- Address rural, understated or areas of extreme poverty?	+	

The Ranking Process will consider 3 factors: the grant review score sheet, the Montana Initiatives and Expectations score sheet, and the Staff Assessment and Recommendation sheet.

